



THE OPEN DOOR

guiding the journey from homeless to home

Presbyterian Night Shelter | Spring Newsletter 2026



A FAMILY'S JOURNEY HOME

Veronica and John are building a stronger future for Willow every day.

When Veronica and John's daughter, Willow, was born, she weighed just over one pound. She was so small that Veronica could cup her in her hands.

"She came out like she was running a marathon — kicking her legs," Veronica remembers.

Rewind the clock a few years, and you'd find Veronica and John meeting through a mutual friend. Up until that point, both Veronica and John had lived hard lives. Both had to grow up incredibly fast, fend for themselves, and cope with the instability in any way possible, including substance abuse.

But soon, they became each other's anchors, even through housing insecurity and homelessness. They inspired each other. They began working at a sushi restaurant, joined an outpatient recovery program, and never looked back. "We [wanted] to be out of this fog. We [wanted] to do better," Veronica recalls.

There was a bright future ahead, a promise that made all the hard work worth it. And that future became clear the day that Willow was born.

"This place means everything."

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A micro-preemie, Willow needed five months in the NICU before she could come home. And making sure there would be a home waiting was essential, given Willow's medical needs.

So Veronica hit the ground running, starting a full-time program in diagnostic sonography just one week after giving birth. She also kept working part-time. Both parents poured their energy into finding a safe place to land, which is ultimately how they came to Presbyterian Night Shelter.

The family moved into The Morris Foundation Family Services Center. "Our own room," Veronica says.

"And [Willow]'s got a playground. She's got a child advocate. We have a caseworker."

Every parenting class, caseworker meeting, and interaction with caring staff reaffirms to Veronica and John that they've found that safe place to land.

"This place means everything," Veronica says.

Now, almost a year after arriving, Veronica is nearing the end of her program. And John is a proud dad. "He's her knight in shining armor," Veronica laughs.

Willow is thriving. At 2, she's grown and developed so much that she'll soon be able to start daycare. The next step for the family? Housing, with support from Presbyterian Night Shelter and friends like you behind them!

YOU GET BACK MORE THAN YOU PUT IN



The sound of a school bell ringing has special meaning to Lea. In her 36-year education career, the morning bell reminded Lea *why* she loved her job.

"When the kids would get off the buses and come into the building...that would hit the button for me. This is why I'm here," she recalls.

After retiring, Lea wanted to find a volunteer opportunity that captured that same feeling and

added structure to her free time. She found it at The Morris Foundation Family Services Center.

Now, every Wednesday, Lea tutors the children staying at Morris. She brings worksheets and a lifetime of experience, offering uninterrupted after-school time to learn and grow. But her support is more than practical; it's meaningful encouragement for kids at a pivotal time.

"Kids are kids," Lea says. "No matter their situation or their circumstances, they just want to be loved. They want to be heard. They want to feel like they're a valued part of the world."

If you feel called to volunteer, Lea says, "just do it. Nobody's going to just throw you out there and say, 'Good luck.' There's always support if you need it."

"And," she adds, "*What you get back from it is so much more, really, than what you put into it!*"

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?
Please visit journeyhome.org/volunteer.



Friends like you make starting over easier for Tracy.

TRACY SOWS SEEDS OF HOPE

Every ounce of love that Tracy has, she's given to the people who surround her. That's just who she is as a mother, a grandmother, and a home health aide.

Tracy met her husband while in one of life's valleys. She was homeless, trying to cope with the loss of her mother through substance abuse. Meeting him was a bright spot.

"He showed me how to love life," she says, remembering the years of happiness together before he passed away from illness.

The grief was nearly unbearable. But this time, Tracy decided she wasn't going to cope with substances. She resolved to pour her love and energy in a new direction: herself.

"It was like starting all over again," she says.

When she came to Presbyterian Night Shelter, Tracy realized she wasn't alone. A caring team helped place her in her own home through Journey Home Housing.

Tracy felt new hope lighting her path. She made new connections at Presbyterian Night Shelter and in her new neighborhood. She cheered on her second grandson as he graduated from UCF. And, she's in sobriety.

Now, Tracy has a new goal: return to school, earn her GED, and become a licensed Certified Nursing Assistant. "It's already in you, if you want to change," she says.



DAY OF SERVICE: OCTOBER 24

We are once again looking forward to an amazing day of volunteering as we prepare for our annual Day of Service, scheduled for Saturday, October 24, 2026! This is a great opportunity for groups and organizations to have a huge impact on our community and guests at Presbyterian Night Shelter through a day of dedicated service.

We will tackle some special projects, as well as provide support for some general maintenance tasks. We are currently looking for project sponsors, in addition to volunteer groups. If your organization or group would like to become a sponsor of this annual event, please contact Bertha Orona, Senior Director of Donor Engagement, at borona@journeyhome.org.



Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

DEAR FRIEND,

Each of us deserves to hold our own future in our own hands. That’s the true definition of empowered, and that’s why we do what we do at Presbyterian Night Shelter. YOU are key to giving our neighbors the tools they need to take charge of today and tomorrow, so **thank you.**

Our neighbors’ needs are becoming more urgent as rates of unsheltered homelessness increase, and we see ongoing cuts to housing program funding and other safety net services.

Yet I have hope, because our approach is working. With no length-of-stay limits and removing as many barriers as possible to housing, fewer than 5% of families return to homelessness in the 2 years after leaving Presbyterian Night Shelter, far below our region’s average.

I hope you know how grateful we are to have your support in this mission. Your generous donations, as well as your volunteerism, provide not just practical support, but encouragement, consistency, and community.

The stories in this newsletter are proof that our work matters. Veronica, John, and Willow’s story is a powerful reminder that behind every number is a family working hard to build a better future.

Thank you again for thinking of our neighbors facing homelessness!

With gratitude,

Toby Owen
Chief Executive Officer

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We strive to break the cycles of homelessness and empower our guests through shelter, housing, and employment.



Our Mission:

“Guiding the journey from homeless to home.”

We work to help Tarrant County residents facing homelessness attain stability, independence, and break the cycle of homelessness.